



Mental Health and the Holidays

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Keeping sane for the holidays can be tough with all the parties, family gatherings, and expense. Some people feel anxious, tension, fatigue, loneliness, stress, depression, and financial constraints. It can all be overwhelming. It is of immense importance to stay positive and be optimistic during these times.

A great way to staying positive is by having family support. Family support can come in different ways, it can be physical, emotional, or both. Find who that family support may be for you, it can be a sibling, parent, aunt, uncle, grandparents, or even your children. In some cases, you may not have family; in that case, a friend could fill that role.

It is also important to keep calm if things don't go your way, here's an example: if you burn the mac and cheese don't stress, have fun and laugh about it. It's no big deal! Having a sense of humor will help minimize stress; after all, this is the season to be jolly. Remember to get a good night sleep; it is important for your overall

health. If you are not getting enough sleep, it can cause fatigue, anger, anxiety, stress, mood swings and depression.

Don't have unrealistic expectations. You are only one person and it is okay if you ask others to contribute. Ask some family members to bring different side dishes. Let others share the responsibility for food and activities. This way the entire load is not on you. There is no shame in asking for help.

The financial constraints of shopping, parties, family reunions and house guests also contribute to feelings of stress and negativity. Stress can cause headaches, excessive drinking, over-eating, and difficulty sleeping. Enjoy free activities such as driving around to look at holiday lights, going window shopping, or going to the park. Try healthy ways of relieving stress and take time to take care of yourself and relax. During the winter, there are fewer hours of sunlight as the days are shorter so remember to soak in all the sunlight as possible.

12 Tips on how to cope and stay positive:

- ♦ Do something nice for someone else
- ♦ Plan ahead
- ♦ Avoid the news
- ♦ Keep expectations for the holidays manageable
- ♦ Choose positive topics, be fun
- ♦ Try something new, celebrate and make new traditions
- ♦ Notice your emotions, such as anger
- ♦ Do not drink in excess, alcohol is a depressant
- ♦ See the good in people, stay positive
- ♦ Spend time with supportive and caring people, make friends
- ♦ Try to set realistic goals for yourself and celebrate achieving them.

Resources:

http://www.oneplaceforspecialneeds.com/main/library_surviving_holidays.html

<https://www.mentalhelp.net/blogs/maintaining-mental-health-during-the-holidays/>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/renee-jain/8-one-minute-anxiety-relief-tools-for-kids-big-and-small_b_6593752.html

http://fhfjefferson.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Behavioral-Health-Guide_final_web-2.pdf

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/fulfillment-any-age/201006/the-importance-vacations-our-physical-and-mental-health>

<https://afsp.org/> 1.800.273.8255

